

[CHEAP REPOSITORY.]

T H E  
Shepherd of Salisbury Plain.

P A R T I.



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THE  
SHEPHERD  
OF

SALISBURY-PLAIN.

**M**R. JOHNSON, a very worthy charitable Gentleman, was travelling in a some time ago across one of those vast Plains which are well known in Wiltshire. It was a fine summer's evening and he rode slowly that he might have leisure to admire God in the works of his creation. For this Gentleman was of opinion, that a walk or a ride, was as proper a time as any to think about good things, for which reason, on such occasions he seldom thought so much about his money, or his trade, or public news, as at other times, that he might with more ease and satisfaction enjoy the pious thoughts which the visible works of the great Maker of heaven and earth are intended to raise in the mind.

His attention was all of a sudden called off by the barking of a Shepherd's dog.

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 and looking up he spied one of those little  
 huts, which are here and there to be seen  
 on these great Downs; and near it was  
 the Shepherd himself busily employed  
 with his dog in collecting together his  
 vast flock of sheep. As he drew nearer  
 he perceived him to be a clean, well-  
 looking, poor man, near fifty years of  
 age. His coat, though at first it had pro-  
 bably been of one dark colour, had been  
 in a long course of years so often patched  
 with different sorts of cloth, that it was  
 now become hard to say which had been  
 the original colour. But this, while it  
 gave a plain proof of the Shepherd's po-  
 verty, equally proved the exceeding neat-  
 ness, industry, and good management of  
 his wife. His stockings no less proved  
 her good housewifery, for they were  
 entirely covered with darns of different  
 coloured worsted, but had not a hole  
 in them; and his shirt, though nearly as  
 coarse as the sails of a ship, was as white  
 as the drifted snow, and neatly mended  
 where time had either made a rent, or  
 worn it thin. This is a rule of judging,  
 by which one shall seldom be deceived.  
 If I meet with a labourer, hedging, ditch-  
 ing, or mending the highways with his



stockings and shirt tight and whole, however mean and bad his other garments are, I have seldom failed, on visiting his cottage, to find that also clean and well ordered, and his wife notable, and worthy of encouragement. Whereas a poor woman, who will be lying a-bed, or gossiping with her neighbours when she ought to be fitting out her husband in a cleanly manner, will seldom be found to be very good in other respects.

This was not the case with our Shepherd: And Mr. Johnson was not more struck with the decency of his mean and frugal dress, than with his open honest countenance, which bore strong marks of health, cheerfulness, and spirit.

Mr. Johnson, who was on a journey, and somewhat fearful from the appearance of the sky, that rain was at no great distance, accosted the Shepherd with asking what sort of weather he thought it would be on the morrow.—“It will be such weather as pleases me,” answered the Shepherd. Though the answer was delivered in the mildest and civilest tone that could be imagined, the Gentleman thought the words themselves rather rude and surly, and asked him how that could be, “Be-



how. cause," replied the Shepherd, " it will be  
s are, such weather as shall please God, and  
cot. whatever pleases him always pleases me."

Mr. Johnson, who delighted in good  
all or. men and good things, was very well satis-  
orthy fied with his reply. For he justly thought  
r wo. that though an hypocrite may easily con-  
offip. trive to appear better than he really is to  
ught a stranger; and that no one should be too  
anly soon trusted, merely for having a few good  
very words in his mouth; yet as he knew that  
" out of the abundance of the heart the  
shep- mouth speaketh," he always accustomed  
more himself to judge favourably of those who  
and had a serious deportment and solid man-  
nest ner of speaking. " It looks as if it pro-  
ks of ceeded from a good habit," said he, " and  
ney, though I may now and then be deceived  
nce by it, yet it has not often happened to me  
dif- to be so. Whereas, if a man accosts me  
ing with an idle, dissolute, vulgar, indecent,  
uld or prophane expression, I have never been  
rea- deceived in him, but have generally on  
ep- inquiry found his character to be as bad  
red as his language gave me room to expect."

He entered into conversation with the  
uld Shepherd in the following manner. Yours  
the is a troublesome life, honest friend, said he.  
-ly, To be sure, Sir, replied the Shepherd,  
3e.

'tis not a very lazy life ; but tis not near so toilsome as that which my GREAT MASTER led for my sake, and he had every state and condition of life at his choice, and chose a hard one—while I only submit to the lot that is appointed me.—You are exposed to great cold and heat, said the Gentleman :—true, Sir, said the Shepherd ; but then I am not exposed to great temptations ; and so throwing one thing against another, God is pleased to contrive to make things more equal than we poor, ignorant, short sighted creatures are apt to think. David was happier when he kept his father's sheep on such a plain as this, and singing some of his own Psalms perhaps, than ever he was when he became king of Israel and Judah. And I dare say we should never have had some of the most beautiful texts in all those fine Psalms, if he had not been a Shepherd, which enabled him to make so many fine comparisons and similitudes, as one may say, from a country life, flocks of sheep, hills, and vallies, and fountains of water.

You think then, said the Gentleman, that a laborious life is a happy one. I do, Sir, and more so especially, as it exposes

a man to fewer sins. If King Saul had continued a poor laborious man to the end of his days, he might have lived happy and honest, and died a natural death in his bed at last, which you know, Sir, was more than he did. But I speak with reverence, for it was divine Providence overruled all that, you know, Sir, and I do not presume to make comparisons. Besides, Sir, my employment has been particularly honoured—Moses was a Shepherd in the plains of Midian.—It was to “Shepherds keeping their flocks by night,” that the angels appeared in Bethlehem, to tell the best news, the gladdest tidings, that ever were revealed to poor sinful men: often, and often has the thought warmed my poor heart in the coldest night, and filled me with more joy and thankfulness than the best supper could have done.

Here the Shepherd stopped, for he began to feel that he had made too free, and had talked too long. But Mr. Johnson was so well pleased with what he said, and with the cheerful contented manner in which he said it, that he desired him to go on freely, for that it was a pleasure to him to meet with a plain man, who



without any kind of learning but what he had got from the Bible, was able to talk so well on a subject in which all men, high and low, rich and poor, are equally concerned.

Indeed I am afraid I make too bold, Sir, for it better becomes me to listen to such a Gentleman as you seem to be, than to talk in my poor way ; but as I was saying, Sir, I wonder all working men do not derive as great joy and delight as I do from thinking how God has honoured poverty ! Oh ! Sir, what great, or rich, or mighty men have had such honour put on them, or their condition, as Shepherds, Tent-makers, Fishermen, and Carpenters have had ?

My honest friend, said the Gentleman, I perceive you are well acquainted with scripture. Yes, Sir, pretty well, blessed be God ! through his mercy I learnt to read when I was a little boy ; though reading was not so common when I was a child, as, I am told, through the goodness of Providence, and the generosity of the rich, it is likely to become now a-days. I believe there is no day for the last thirty years, that I have not peeped at my Bible. If we can't find time to read a chapter,

I defy any man to say he can't find time to read a verse; and a single text Sir, well followed and put in practice every day, would make no bad figure at the year's end; three hundred and sixty-five texts, without the loss of a moment's time, would make a pretty stock, a little golden treasury, as one may say, from new-year's day to new-year's day; and if children were brought up to it, they would look for their text as naturally as they do for their breakfast. No labouring man, 'tis true, has so much leisure as a Shepherd, for while the flock is feeding, I am obliged to be still, and at such times I can now and then tap a shoe for my children or myself, which is a great saving to us, and while I am doing that I repeat a bit of a chapter, which makes the time pass pleasantly in this wild solitary place. I can say the best part of the Bible by heart, I believe I should not say the best part, for every part is good, but I mean the greatest part. I have led but a lonely life, and have often had but little to eat, but my Bible has been meat, drink and company to me, as I may say, and when want and trouble have come upon me, I don't know what I should have done indeed, Sir, if I

had not had the promises of this book for my stay and support.

You have had great difficulties then? said Mr. Johnson. Why, as to that, Sir, not more than neighbours fare, I have but little cause to complain, and much to be thankful; but I have had some little struggles, as I will leave you to judge. I have a wife and eight children, whom I bred up in that little cottage which you see under the hill about half a mile off. What, that with the smoke coming out of the chimney, said the Gentleman. O no, Sir, replied the Shepherd smiling, we have seldom smoke in the evening, for we have little to cook, and fireing is very dear in these parts. 'Tis that cottage which you see on the left hand of the Church, near that little tuft of hawthorns. What that hovel with only one room above and one below, with scarcely any chimney, how is it possible you can live there with such a family! O! it is very possible and very certain too, cried the Shepherd. How many better men have been worse lodged! how many good christians have perished in prisons and dungeons, in comparison of which my cottage is a palace. The house is very well,



ok for Sir, and if the rain did not sometimes beat down upon us through the thatch when we are a-bed, I should not desire a better; for I have health, peace, and liberty, and no man maketh me afraid.

Well, I will certainly call on you before it be long; but how can you contrive to lodge so many children? We do the best we can, Sir. My poor wife is a very sickly woman, or we should always have done tolerably well. There are no gentry in the parish, so that she has not met with any great assistance in her sickness. The good curate of the parish who lives in that pretty parsonage in the valley, is very willing, but not very able to assist us on these trying occasions, for he has little enough for himself and a large family into the bargain. Yet he does what he can, and more than many richer men do, and more than he can well afford. Besides that, his prayers and good advice we are always sure of, and we are truly thankful for that, for a man must give, you know, Sir, according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not.

Are you in any distress at present? said Mr. Johnson. No, Sir, thank God, re-

plied the Shepherd. I get my shilling a day, and most of my children will soon be able to earn something; for we have only three under five years of age. Only! said the Gentleman, that is a heavy burden. Not at all; God fits the back to it. Tho' my wife is not able to do any out of door work, yet she breeds up our children to such habits of industry, that our little maids before they are six years old can first get a halfpenny, and then a penny a-day by knitting. The boys who are too little to do hard work, get a trifle by keeping the birds off the corn; for this the farmers will give them a penny or two-pence, and now and then a bit of bread and cheese into the bargain. When the season of crow keeping is over, then they glean or pick stones; any thing is better than idleness, Sir, and if they do not get a farthing by it, I would make them do it just the same, for the sake of giving them early habits of labour.

So you see, Sir, I am not so badly off as many are; nay, if it were not that it costs me so much in Potecary's stuff for my poor wife, I should reckon myself well off. Nay, I do reckon myself well off, for blessed be God, he has granted her life to

my prayers, and I would work myself to a 'natomy, and live on one meal a-day to add any comfort to her valuable life ; indeed I have often done the last, and thought it no great matter neither.

While they were on this part of the discourse, a fine plump cherry-cheek little girl ran up out of breath, with a smile on her young happy face, and without taking any notice of the Gentleman, cried out with great joy—Look here, father, only see how much I have got to-day ! Mr. Johnson was much struck with her simplicity, but puzzled to know what was the occasion of this great joy. On looking at her he perceived a small quantity of coarse wool, some of which had found it's way through the holes of her clean, but scanty and ragged woollen apron. The father said, this has been a successful day indeed, Molly, but don't you see the Gentleman ? Molly now made a curtsy down to the very ground ; while Mr. Johnson enquired into the cause of the mutual satisfaction which both father and daughter had expressed, at the unusual good fortune of the day.

Sir, said the Shepherd, poverty is a great sharpener of wits.—My wife and I



cannot endure to see our children (poor as they are) without shoes and stockings, not only on account of the pinching cold which cramps their poor little limbs, but because it degrades and debases them; and poor people who have but little regard to appearances will seldom be found to have any great regard for honesty and goodness; I don't say this is always the case; but I am sure it is so too often. Now shoes and stockings being very dear we could never afford to get them without a little contrivance. I must shew you how I manage about the shoes when you condescend to call at our cottage, Sir; as to stockings, this is one way we take to help get them. My young ones who are too little to do much work, sometimes wander at odd hours over the hills for the chance of finding what little wool the sheep may drop when they rub themselves, as they are apt to do, in the bushes.\* These scattered bits of wool the children pick out of the brambles, which I see, have torn sad holes in Molly's apron to-day; they carry this

\* This piece of frugal industry is not imaginary, but a real fact, as is the character of the Shepherd, and his uncommon knowledge of the scriptures.

wool home, and when they have got a pretty parcel together, their mother cards it; for she can sit and card in the chimney corner, when she is not able to wash, or work about house. The biggest girl then spins it; it does very well for us without dying, for poor people must not stand for the colour of their stockings. After this our little boys knit it for themselves, while they are employed in keeping crows in the fields, and after they get home at night. As for the knitting the girls and their mother do, that is chiefly for sale, which helps to pay our rent.

Mr. Johnson lifted up his eyes in silent astonishment at the shifts which honest poverty can make rather than beg or steal; and was surprised to think how many ways of subsisting there are which those who live at their ease little suspect. He secretly resolved to be more attentive to his own petty expences than he had hitherto been; and to be more watchful that nothing was wasted in his family.

But to return to the Shepherd. Mr. Johnson told him that as he must needs be at his friend's house, who lived many miles off that night, he could not as he wished to do, make a visit to his cottage

at present. But I will certainly do it, said he on my return, for I long to see your wife and her nice little family, and to be an eye witness of her neatness and good management. The poor man's tears started into his eyes on hearing the commendation bestowed on his wife; and wiping them off with the sleeve of his coat, for he was not worth a handkerchief in the world, he said—Oh! Sir, you just now, I am afraid, called me an humble man, but indeed I am a very proud one. Proud! exclaimed Mr. Johnson, I hope not—Pride is a great sin, and as the poor are liable to it as well as the rich, so good a man as you seem to be, ought to guard against it. Sir, said he, you are right, but I am not proud of myself, God knows, I have nothing to be proud of. I am a poor sinner, but indeed Sir, I am proud of my wife: She is not only the most tidy, notable woman on the Plain, but she is the kindest wife and mother, and the most contented, thankful christian that I know. Last year I thought I should have lost her in a violent fit of the rheumatism, caught by going to work too soon after her lying-in, I fear; for 'tis but a bleak



coldish place, as you may see, Sir, in winter, and sometimes the snow lies so long under the hill, that I can hardly make myself a path to get out and buy a few necessaries in the next village; and we are afraid to send out the children, for fear they should be lost when the snow is deep. So, as I was saying, the poor soul was very bad indeed, and for several weeks lost the use of all her limbs except her hands; a merciful Providence spared her the use of these, so that when she could not turn in her bed, she could contrive to patch a rag or two for her family. She was always saying, had it not been for the great goodness of God, she might have had the palsy instead of the rheumatism, and then she could have done nothing—but nobody had so many mercies as she had.

I will not tell you what we suffered during that bitter weather, Sir, but my wife's faith and patience during that trying time, were as good a lesson to me as any Sermon I could hear, and yet Mr. Jenkins gave us very comfortable ones too, that helped to keep up my spirits.

One Sunday afternoon when my wife

was at the worst, as I was coming out of Church, for I went one part of the day, and my eldest daughter the other, so my poor wife was never left alone. As I was coming out of Church, I say, Mr. Jenkins the minister called out to me, and asked me how my wife did, saying he had been kept from coming to see her by the deep fall of snow, and indeed from the parsonage-house to my hovel it was quite impassible. I gave him all the particulars he asked, and I am afraid a good many more, for my heart was quite full. He kindly gave me a shilling, and said he would certainly try to pick out his way and come and see her in a day or two.

While he was talking to me, a plain farmer-looking Gentleman in boots, who stood by, listened to all I said, but seemed to take no notice. It was Mr. Jenkins's wife's father, who was come to pass the Christmas holidays at the parsonage-house. I had always heard him spoken of as a plain frugal man, who lived close himself, but was remarked to give away more than any of his show-away neighbours.

Well! I went home with great spirits at this seasonable and unexpected supply;

ut of for we had tapped our last fix-pence, and  
 day, there was little work to be had on ac-  
 my count of the weather. I told my wife I  
 was was not come back empty handed. No,  
 kins I dare say not, says she, you have been  
 lked serving a master " who filleth the hungry  
 been with good things, though he sendeth the  
 deep rich empty away." True, Mary, says I :  
 son- we seldom fail to get good spiritual food  
 im- from Mr. Jenkins, but to day he has kind-  
 lars ly supplied our bodily wants. She was  
 any more thankful when I shewed her the shil-  
 He ling, than I dare say, some of your great  
 l he people are when they get an hundred  
 way pounds.

Mr. Johnson's heart smote him when he  
 heard such a value set upon a shilling ;  
 surely, said he to himself, I will never  
 waste another ; but he said nothing to the  
 Shepherd, who thus pursued his story.

Next morning before I went out, I sent  
 part of the money to buy a little ale and  
 brown sugar to put into her water gruel ;  
 which you know, Sir, made it nice and  
 nourishing. I went out to cleave wood  
 in a farm-yard, for there was no standing  
 out on the plain, after such a snow as had  
 fallen in the night. I went with a lighter  
 heart than usual, because I had left my



poor wife a little better; and comfortably supplied for this day, and I now resolved more than ever to trust in God for the supplies of the next. When I came back at night, my wife fell a crying as soon as she saw me. This, I own I thought but a bad return for the blessings she had so lately received, and so I told her. O, said she, it is too much, we are too rich; I am now frightened, not lest we should have no portion in this world, but for fear we should have our whole portion in it. Look here, John! So saying she uncovered the bed whereon she lay, and shewed me two warm, thick, new blankets. I could not believe my own eyes, Sir, because when I went out in the morning, I had left her with no other covering than our little old thin blue rug. I was still more amazed when she put half a crown into my hand, telling me she had had a visit from Mr. Jenkins, and Mr. Jones, the latter of whom had bestowed all these good things upon us. Thus, Sir, have our lives been crowned with mercies. My wife got about again, and I do believe, under Providence, it was owing to these comforts; for the rheumatism, Sir, without blankets by

night and flannel by day, is but a bad-  
 dish job, especially to people who have  
 little or no fire. She will always be a  
 weakly body; but thank God her soul  
 prospers and is in health. But I beg your  
 pardon, Sir, for talking on at this rate.  
 Not at all, not at all, said Mr. Johnson;  
 you shall certainly see me in a few days.  
 Good night. So saying, he slipped a  
 crown into his hand, and rode off. Sure-  
 ly, said the Shepherd, *goodness and mercy*  
*have followed me all the days of my life*, as  
 he gave the money to his wife when he  
 got home at night.

As to Mr. Johnson, he found abundant  
 matter for his thoughts during the rest of  
 his journey. On the whole he was more  
 disposed to envy than to pity the Shep-  
 herd. I have seldom seen, said he, so  
 happy a man. It is a sort of happiness  
 which the world could not give, and  
 which I plainly see, it has not been able  
 to take away. This must be the true  
 spirit of Religion. I see more and more,  
 that true goodness is not merely a thing  
 of words and opinions, but a Living  
 Principle brought into every common ac-  
 tion of a man's life. What else could  
 have supported this poor couple under

every bitter trial of want, and sickness?  
 No, my honest Shepherd, I do not pity,  
 but I respect and even honour thee ; and  
 I will visit thy poor hovel on my return  
 to Salisbury with as much pleasure as I  
 am now going to the house of my friend.

If Mr. Johnson keeps his word in sending me the account of his visit to the Shepherd's cottage, I shall be very glad to entertain my readers with it, and shall conclude this first part. (Z.)



# The Lancashire Collier Girl. A TRUE STORY.



**I**N a small village in Lancashire there lived a few years ago, an industrious man and his wife, who had six children. The man himself used to work in a neighbouring colliery, while the wife took care of the family, attended also to their little farm, and minded the dairy, and when all her other work was done, she used constantly to sit down to spin. It will naturally be supposed that the children of such a mother, even when very young, were

not suffered to be idle. The eldest daughter worked with the mother at the spinning-wheel, which she learnt to think a very pleasant employment, and she sometimes accompanied her work with a cheerful hymn, or a good moral song, which her parents had taken care to teach her.

But the second daughter of the name of *Mary* is the chief subject of the present story : when this girl was nine years old, the honest collier finding that he had but little employment for her above ground, took her to work with him down in the coal-pit together with one of his boys, who was then no more than seven years of age. These two children readily put their strength to the basket ; dragging the coals from the workmen to the mouth of the pit ; and by their joint labours they did the duty of one of those men, who are commonly called, “ the drawers,” clearing thereby no less than seven shillings a week for their parents. It must be owned to be not impossible, that they may have sometimes exerted themselves even beyond their strength ; which is now and then the case with little children, through the fault of those who exact the work from them ; but since in this case

the father had an eye to them during the hours of labour, while they had a prudent and tender mother also, to look after them at home, there is no particular reason to suppose, that at the time of which we are now speaking, they were ever much over-worked.

Here then let us stop to remark how different was the case of this numerous family from that of many others, in the same humble situation of life. *Mary* and her brother, so far from being a burthen, were bringing a little fortune to their parents, even when they were eight or ten years old; all the family were getting forward by the help of these little creatures, and their worldly comforts were now increasing on every side.

But alas! in the midst of this cheerful and contented diligence, on one fatal day, while the good man was in the act of fixing a basket, in order to its being wound up, the children standing near him in the coal-pit, some stones fell from the top of the pit, one of which fell on the father's head, and killed him on the spot. What a melancholy event was this! some dismal circumstances also remain to be told, which were the consequences of it; but in order



to relieve the pain of my reader, I will here remark, that the most grievous afflictions are often appointed by providence, to be the means, in one way or other, of calling some extraordinary virtue into exercise; and accordingly we shall see that the calamity which is now spoken of, will introduce *Mary*, the young collier girl, to the farther good opinion of the reader.

The mother, on hearing the news of her husband's death, together with the description of the sad accident which gave occasion to it, received such a shock, that her mind was not able to bear up under it; she became disordered in her understanding, nor did she to the end of her life recover her senses. Being now rendered extremely helpless, she was separated from her children by the parish officers, who continued to take the charge of her for the space of five years. A short time after the father's death, the eldest daughter, (the spinner) married, and went from home; two of the brothers, (of the ages of nine and seven,) were bound apprentices by the parish, which also took the charge of two others, (one three years old, the other an infant) until they should be sufficiently grown up to be bound out also.

In this place I cannot avoid observing, what a blessing it is to poor people in this country, that parish officers are obliged, in all such cases of necessity as that of which I am now speaking, to give maintainance to those, who apply to them, and what a pity it is that this wise and merciful provision of our laws should ever be abused. *Mary*, the girl of whom we are giving the history, having been already trained to industry, was by no means disposed to seek any unnecessary help from the parish, and being now between eleven and twelve years old, she determined to maintain herself, like a little independent woman, by her usual work in the coal pit, where she was generally able after this time to earn at least a shilling a day; in three or four years afterwards earning no less than two shillings. And now I would ask my young female readers, what they think was the manner in which she employed all this fruit of her industry? Do you imagine that she laid it out in vanity of dress, in nice eating and drinking, or other needless expence? or do you suppose that she would now indulge herself in idleness on one or two days in the week, because she had got enough for

herself to live upon during the four or five working days? no: I trust you will have formed no such expectation: I hope you will be well aware what *Mary* did with her money, by having already reflected what you would have done with it in the like case. She in the first place released the parish from the burthen of maintaining her mother, which she did as soon as she was arrived at the age of sixteen, being extremely anxious to take this poor disordered helpless parent home to live with herself: she then relieved the parish officers from the charge of one of her brothers, and she continued to provide for him, until he died. Having been taught never to consider her duty as done, while any part of it seemed to be left undone, she afterwards undertook the maintainance of one of her other brothers, who remained with her during sixteen weeks illness, at the end of which period she followed him to the grave, burying him at her own expence. After about seven years the mother died also, and was buried in like manner by this dutiful child, without any assistance from the parish.

If any of my readers should here inquire how it could be possible for so young



five child to support all these relations, many of them being also occasionally very burthensome through their sickness? the answer is, that in the case of these extraordinary calls upon her, she used to betake herself to extraordinary labour, sometimes earning no less than three shillings and six-pence in the four and twenty hours, by taking what is called "a double turn" in the coal-pits.

The ready submission of *Mary* to her parents when she was in early life, is so pleasing a part of her character, that it may be proper in this place again to make a remark upon it. Let my young readers recollect that in submission to the command of her father, or rather to that law of God which enjoins parental obedience, she cheerfully followed him down into the coal-pit, burying herself in the bowels of the earth, and there at a tender age, without excusing herself on account of her sex, she joined in the same work with the miners, a race of men rough indeed, but highly useful to the community, of whom I am also happy to say that they have the character of being honest and faithful, as well as remarkably courageous, and that they have given moreover some

striking instances of their readiness to receive religious instruction, when offered to them. Among these men to their honor nor be it spoken, *Mary's* virtue was safe and after the death of her father, she is even said to have received protection, as well as assistance from them; her fatigue having been sometimes lessened, through their lending her a helping hand, with great feeling and kindness.

But though *Mary's* mind was naturally strong, and her constitution of body was very stout also, yet towards the end of the period which has been spoken of, she began to be bowed down in some measure by the afflictions and labors which she had endured. It was evident that she had now been led to exert herself beyond her strength. How lamentable is it, that while so many people in the world are idle, and are contracting diseases both of body and mind, from the abundance of their riches, and from want of some wholesome and useful exercise, there should be any bending like *Mary*, under their work, hidden in coal-pits, or from some cause or other removed from observation! what a pity is it I say, that the former should not employ a little of their time and money in en-

s to re- endeavouring to find these distressed objects !  
 offered And I may also add, how lamentable a  
 their ho- thing is it, that while so many poor peo-  
 as safe- ple are seen, who are apt to complain too  
 she is- soon, there should be any, who do not  
 on, as- tell their distresses to those who can help  
 fatigue- them (which I trust however does not of-  
 rough- ten happen) till it is almost too late !

with I was observing that *Mary* began about  
 his time evidently to lose her strength,  
 urally and her head was also troubled by some of  
 y was those strange and unpleasant imaginations,  
 of the which are known by persons conversant  
 ne be- with the diseases of the poor, to be no un-  
 asure- usual consequence of bad food, and great  
 e had- bodily fatigue, joined with excessive grief.  
 l now At first she was not aware that she labour-  
 l her- ed under any disorder, for she had seldom  
 while- experienced ill health, while her relations  
 , and- were alive ; and it seems probable that the  
 r and- comfort which she derived from the re-  
 ches, flection of affording them support, and the  
 e and- pleasing sensations which arose during the  
 pend- exercise of her attention to them, had  
 dden- served both to keep up her spirits, and to  
 other- prevent her constitution from breaking  
 ity is- down.

employ I trust it is not superstitious to suppose  
 n en- that when sincere christians come, as Ma-



ry now did, into very trying circumstances, they may hope, notwithstanding any appearances to the contrary, to experience still in one way or other, the peculiar blessing of Heaven; I do not expect that such persons will be free from pain, poverty, or sickness, or other worldly evils, for it is often quite the contrary, but then I believe that these very afflictions will be made the means of encreasing their trust in God, and prove in the end, (I mean either here or hereafter) to have been entirely designed for their good. The calamities of *Mary* were now risen to such height, that those who are not accustomed to view things in this religious and most comforting light, might be ready to imagine that the Almighty had forsaken her and that there is little use in serving him. Let us here number up her afflictions. She had seen with her own eyes the dreadful death of her father, she had for a long time witnessed the affecting condition of her mother, who used to follow her about the house, without knowing the hand by which she was supported; *Mary*, beside this, had attended the long and drooping sickness of her two brothers; and now having fallen sick herself, being both weak

dy, and sadly enfeebled in her mind, she was dwelling all alone in a little comfortable habitation, having been deprived by death of every one of those dear relatives, the sight of whom had many a time cheered her spirits, while the idea of supplying them with a comfortable subsistence, had been used to sweeten her employment, and lighten the severity of her toil.

It was at this period of her extremity that it pleased God to raise up for her some kind friends, in the manner which I shall now describe.

A lady of the same village heard that a servant's place was vacant in a neighbouring family, and advised *Mary*, feeble as she was, to present herself there, as a candidate to fill this comparatively easy and comfortable situation. Accordingly the poor girl, with an anxious heart, went to offer her services; she mentioned with her usual honesty, what had been the habits of her former life, and what was the state of her health also: it seemed undoubtedly much against her interest to do so, but it was perfectly right; and how can any of us hope for the blessing of God, or expect any true comfort in our minds when we

fall into affliction, if we fly to unfair means of rescuing ourselves out of it; and instead of trusting in God, trust to our own little frauds, and crooked contrivances.

The answer made to *Mary's* application was unfavourable, for it was thought, and indeed it was gently hinted, that a young woman, hitherto so much exposed as she had been, was not likely to prove a very fit inmate in a sober private family.

*Mary* felt very keenly this unhappy suspicion against her character; but what could she do? she walked very quietly away, with a down-cast look, and with a mind quite broken down by this fresh affliction and disaster. The owners of the mansion happened however to observe her countenance, and the peculiar modesty of her manner, as she was taking her departure, for her patient and silent grief touched them far more sensibly than any loud complaints could have done and they therefore determined to make some inquiries concerning her. The gentleman went himself on the same day to the colliery, where the master of the pit replied to his questions, nearly in the following terms. " Sir, said he, she is a poor girl



at has over-worked herself, for she has undertaken that we call task work, which is very hard labour; she is one of the best girls that ever I knew, and is respected by all the colliers, and though (added he) I cannot say that now and then my men take a cup too much, which is apt to make them sometimes quarrelsome, yet they never suffer a bad word to be spoken or an affront to be offered to a girl in the pit, without punishing the fellow who may be guilty, and making him heartily ashamed of himself."

This rule of decency and propriety towards young women, established by a set of coarse miners, is here recorded for the benefit of some of those persons, who are pleased to call themselves their betters.

The Gentleman, after a very minute and full examination, was so well satisfied of the good character of Mary, that she was received into his service, in which she has now been living comfortably for about the space of six years. Her health is recovered, her habits of diligence are still very great, and she is said to be of a remarkably modest, humble and contented spirit. It may not be improper to mention, that the master of the house in which she is, has furnished all the materials of this story.

I will now take leave of my readers, by remarking, that the little tale which I have been reciting, seems to me to hold out the following useful lessons.

In the first place, I think it may teach the poor, that they can seldom be in any condition of life so low, as to prevent their rising to some degree of independence, if they chuse to exert themselves, and that there can be no situation whatever so mean, as to forbid the practice of many noble virtues. It may instruct the rich not to turn the poor from their doors, merely on account of first appearances, but rather to examine into their character, expecting sometimes to find peculiar modesty and merit, even in the most exposed situations. This

story also may encourage the afflicted to serve and trust God in every extremity : and finally, it may teach all descriptions of persons, who may have to pass through dangerous and trying circumstances, that they may expect the divine protection and blessing, provided they are not needlessly throwing themselves in the way of temptation, but are endeavouring like *Mary* “ to learn  
 “ and labour truly to get their own living, and to do  
 “ their duty in that state of life, unto which it hath  
 “ pleased God to call them.”

F I N I S.